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CIA and U.S.'s 'greatest strength'

It ought to go without saying, but Admiral Stansfield Turner said it, and we are glad. "I would resign if put into the position of carrying out an immoral or illegal action," he promised in Senate hearings for heading the CIA.

To give such an assurance reflects the Admiral's valuable recognition that, despite all the new machinery of reform, the reputation and credibility of the intelligence community still need further restoration. Tight regulations are necessary, but there is no substitute for individuals devoted to carrying them out in the spirit as well as the letter.

Again, it ought to go without saying, but it was good to hear Admiral Turner testifying that President Carter wants all intelligence activities conducted "strictly in accordance with the law and with American values." After the disclosures of the past, this is no easy assurance to give or live up to. Our high confidence in the Admiral's determination to do so was bolstered even further by his statement of basic American outlook: "I believe with my deepest conviction that the greatest strength we have as a world power is our moral dedication to the rights of the individual."